



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

May 10, 2012

REQUEST: City Council Bill #12-0030/Zoning – Conditional Use – Amending Ordinance 97-208

For the purpose of amending the maximum bed capacity for the nonprofit home and transitional housing facility for the care and custody of homeless persons on the property known as 3500-3502 Clifton Avenue; adding certain condition, and correcting and conforming certain references.

RECOMMENDATION: Amend and Approve and subject to:

1. Amendment No. 1 – On page 2, in lin1, strike “58” and substitute “62”.
2. Amendment No. 2 – On page 2, strike line 3 and 4 that limits the square foot of the facility.
3. Amendment No. 3 – On page 2, adds the condition “8. That Lots 1, 3 and 4 of Block 2810, be consolidated.”
4. That the site plan complies with the requirements of the Site Plan Review Committee, and
5. That the elevations are approved by the Department of Planning.

STAFF: Ken Hranicky

PETITIONER(S): Jobs, Housing and Recovery, Inc.

OWNER: Jobs, Housing and Recovery, Inc.

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: There are three properties associated the proposed legislation, CCB #12-0030; they include 3500-3502, 3504 and 3506 Clifton Avenue. The 3500-02 Clifton Avenue property is located on the northwest corner of the intersection with N. Edgewood Street. This property measures, approximately 104’ by 150’. The 3500 Clifton Avenue property is currently improved with a three-story residential building and is zoned R-7. The 3504 and 3506 properties are unimproved and combine for an area of 75’ by 150’. The properties are zoned R-7.

General Area: This property lies within the Mount Holly neighborhood, which can be characterized as a residential area with the majority of the housing stock being represented by single-family detached homes. In the immediate area is Walbrook Shopping Center and what is

use to be Walbrook High School that is currently occupied by Homeland Security High School and Baltimore Civitas School.

HISTORY

Ordinance #97-208, establishing the transitional housing facility at 3500-3502 Clifton Avenue, was approved on November 11, 1997.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

This project is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan's LIVE section, Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods, Objective 1: Expand Housing Choices for all Residents.

ANALYSIS

The petitioner has been operating a transitional housing facility, known as Carrington House, at this location since 1997. The facility presently has a capacity of twenty-eight (28) clients. The petitioner is currently operating under Ordinance 97-208 with a limit of 28 clients. The petitioner is seeking to expand their operation. Carrington House is a highly structured, residential substance abuse recovery program that provides homeless men the tools and life skills they need to turn their backs on addiction once and for all and rebuild their lives –one day at a time. The applicant is seeking to secure various approvals and then will raise funds for the construction of the expansion.

Carrington House services include individual and group counseling, access to GED classes and vocational training, jobs placement, relapse prevention classes, recovery and life skills workshops. Graduates leave the program with a network of support, employment, and if possible a GED. Clients entering Carrington House must be homeless, challenged with substance abuse and transitioning from a drug treatment center detox or 28-day treatment program. The Clients are not allowed to have a car at the facility and the clients are not allowed guests. Clients are at this facility for up to two years. Clients also assume some of the operational and maintenance responsibilities at the Carrington House the limits the amount of staff needed for the House.

The applicant has purchased the adjacent properties at 3504 and 3506 Clifton Avenue and is seeking to expand their facility to accommodate 62 clients. City Council Bill 12-0030 amends Ordinance 97-208 for an expansion of 58 clients. The increase from 58 to 62 does not precipitate or trigger any regulatory threshold and is consistent with the plans of the applicant. This would require 4 full-time staff that would not be clients. The current expansion plan calls for a single-story 3,500 square foot addition that would accommodate a dining area, kitchen and an accessible roof that would be open as a gathering space for residents. The current facility has a parking pad for six vehicles.

The expansion has not been through the Site Plan Review Committee. Building across properties lines is not allowed and the applicant needs to consolidate the properties 3500, 3504 and 3506 before the construction is permitted.

Zoning Analysis:

1. In the Baltimore City Zoning Code the Carrington House facility comes under the Baltimore City Zoning category of a home for non-bedridden alcoholics or homeless persons: non-profit.
2. In an R-7 residential zoning district, this type of housing requires conditional use approval by City Council ordinance.
3. City Council Bill #12-0030, is the required legislation and if approved would authorize the expansion of the Carrington House at 3500 Clifton Avenue.
4. Off-street parking variances may be granted as part of an ordinance authorizing a conditional use by no more than 75% the number of off-street parking spaces otherwise required. Ordinance 97-208 required 6 spaces with two of them being handicap accessible. City has consistently viewed the parking requirements for these types of facilities as similar to institution for the care of the aged, convalescent, nursing and rest homes which call for 1 per 5 beds plus one (1) per six employees. This would be a requirement of 15 spaces. Applicant is seeking a variance from this parking requirement for a total of 6 spaces.

Variances: As per §15-101 of the zoning code, the Mayor and City Council may grant variances as part of an ordinance authorizing or amending a conditional use. This project as proposed will require that the City Council grant a variance for off-street parking,

In order to approve the off-street parking variance, the Mayor and City Council must make a finding of unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty (§15-218), and must make other specific required findings (§15-219). The applicant has provided a summary of their justification for the variances sought. Staff has reviewed this summary and finds it reasonable. For that reason, staff recommends approval of the specific variance requested.

Findings: As per §14-204, conditional use requires findings on considerations of standards prescribed by §14-205. Staff finds that:

1. The expansion of this assisted living facility at 3500 Clifton Avenue, in terms of location, maintenance, and operation of the conditional use, will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, security, general welfare or morals. The operation of an assisted living facility will not create undue stress on community resources and is consistent with the City Master Plan in providing housing choices for all people.
2. That the proposed use is not in any way precluded by any other law.
3. The authorization of this conditional use is not contrary to the public interest.
4. The authorization is in harmony with the purpose and intent of this article.

The Greater Walbrook Coalition, Mt. Holly Improvement Association, Inc., Southwestern District Police-Community Relations Council and the Western Community Action Center, have been notified of this action.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director